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ABSTRACT

The New England Consortium criteria of excellence are 26 statements of conditions which describe a quality reading program and which must exist if all children are to learn to read. These statements are grouped under five goal areas, the fifth of which, fostering reading interests, is treated in this position paper. The paper supports attainment of the following criteria for this goal area: the school reading program recognizes the importance of personal, independent reading and promotes this type of reading in a variety of ways, and the library promotes reading among all segments of the population. (JM)

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# Fostering Reading Interests

A Position Paper of

THE NEW ENGLAND CONSORTIUM
FOR THE RIGHT TO READ

September 1976

CS003046

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# Introduction

The New England Consortium Criteria of Excellence are twenty-six statements of conditions that describe a quality reading program. These conditions must exist if all children are to learn to read. The relative quality of a program may be judged by determining the degree to which it meets these standards.

The statements are grouped under five goal areas, as shown below:

New England Consortium Criteria of Excellence
Goal Areas

A. Community and School Climate
B. Organizing and Managing a Reading Program
C. Staffing a Reading Program
D. Selecting and Utilizing Materials
*E. Fostering Reading Interests

The position taken in this paper supports attainment of the criteria in Goal Area E: Fostering Reading Interests, as listed below:

1. The school reading program recognizes the importance of personal independent reading and promotes this type of reading in a variety of ways.
2. The public library promotes reading among all segments of the population.

This position paper is provided to assist school personnel in developing a rationale for and in planning programs and activities to meet these criteria.

# Fostering Reading Interests

A successful reading program turns out students who not only can read but do read. By this standard the reading programs in America's schools have failed most seriously. This paper addresses the position that *a good reading program includes personal independent reading as one component and promotes this type of reading in a variety of ways.*

To document the need for taking this position, the current status of personal reading is explored. This is followed by a review of what is known about reading interests to provide an information base for this aspect of the program. The final part of the paper describes the conditions that must exist in schools where high motivation for reading is fostered.

## Status of Personal Reading

Personal reading is affected by many conditions: among them are the literacy level of the persons involved, the availability of reading materials and external influences on motivation to read.

*Level of literacy.* Among all age groups, it must be recognized that the ability to read affects interest in reading. Both the level at which one can read independently and the relative difficulty experienced if this level is significantly below that of others in one's age group are important factors. A person's independent reading level limits, to a considerable extent, the number and appropriateness of available books as those that are too difficult or lacking in interest serve only to build resistance to reading. Therefore, it seems appropriate to begin this discussion with a determination of what percentage of the population is equipped with the literacy skills for wide personal reading.

Several studies provide estimates of the literacy level among adults. According to a 1970 Harris survey, approximately 18 million adult Americans were functionally illiterate, lacking even minimal reading skills. Of this number, it was estimated that 1.5 million were totally illiterate. In the 1971 Reginald Corder Study[1], *The Information Base for Reading*, a chapter by Abraham Carp reports on literacy based on grade equivalents. Determined by the distribution of grade equivalent scores on norm referenced tests, he concludes:

> If we accept a grade equivalent of 5.0 as the standard for meeting social and literacy needs, about one percent of those with 12 years of education, 3 percent of those with 10 years of education, 13 percent of those with 8 years of education, and 30 percent of those with 6 years of education will read below this standard.

[1] Educational Testing Service, Berkeley, California

If we accept the figure of 8.0 as the standard, then 13 percent of those with 12 years of education, 24 percent of those with 10 years and 50 percent of those with 8 years will fail to meet the standard.

In contrast to this norm-referenced approach, Northcutt designed a study using criterion measures of content and skills thought to be most critical to adult performance. His findings indicate that 21.7 percent of adults are below the functional level, 32.2 percent just functional and 46.1 percent proficient.

Regardless of the basis for estimate, it seems that a sizable portion of the adult population has less than adequate skill development to bring to personal reading. To a significant extent, this must affect the proportion of the population designated as the reading public.

Among students in school, one study showed that 25 percent of fifth graders read at or below third grade level. Rough estimates of the school population in general, based on various studies and reports, identify, on the average, one in every seven students as reading disabled. These data must surely be kept in mind as the status of personal reading is discussed.

*Availability of reading materials.* America does have a reading public, one that is often overlooked in our concern to raise the level of literacy. Consider these facts: nearly two billion dollars worth of books per year, approximately 270,000,000 copies of magazines per issue and 60,000,000 newspapers per day are purchased. These quantity figures are impressive, but the questions of quality, commercialization, and the effect of the recent economic crisis come into play in interpreting this information. Another factor to consider is the relative size of the population consuming these print materials for it is recognized that there is a segment of the population that reads avidly, consuming more than the average per/person number of materials. The large numbers quoted above provide no clue to the number of readers. It cannot be assumed, for example, that 60,000,000 newspapers are distributed to 60,000,000 homes. These factors will be considered below.

The role of books in American life has changed considerably since the "paperback revolution", the most important development in print media since the Gutenburg Press. Before the 30's, books were almost exclusively the property of the rich and the intellectual because of their relatively high hard-cover prices and limited availability. Now they could be had by all. Paperback titles increased more than tenfold in the years 1945-1975 from an estimated 8,000 to over 90,000. Only during this past year were fewer titles produced than in the preceding year, the first decline in many years and undoubtedly related to the economy.

The economy has affected even the type of book purchased: travel books, at a time of little vacation money, were halved while self-help books were at an all-time high. Given the laws of economics, publishers make available the types of books currently in demand. In this case, as in others, the publishing industry was quick to respond to the needs of the reading public with both new titles and new editions of popular titles.

Newspapers reached a record high circulation of 63.1 million copies per day in 1973. A decline of 2.5 million copies since then is also recession related. Rising paper and production costs were followed by a rise in price and a decrease in circulation. When the cost of the Boston Sunday Globe increased from 50 to 75 cents in January, 1975, for example, 90,000 fewer papers were sold. Since then, half the lost readers have been recouped, however, by livelier, more contemporary layouts including consumer columns, entertainment directories and suburban news. As in book-buying, it is possible to detect factors that influence the sale of newspapers.

Libraries provide another source of reading materials. According to a 1974 survey by the National Center for Educational Statistics, the direct circulation of all library materials in the United States annually was estimated to be 892,854,268 pieces. However, since a large number of materials were borrowed by a small number of users, the number is deceptive.

As part of the *Public Library Inquiry*, a Carnegie Corporation funded project, Berelson synthesized public library studies completed between 1930 and 1949 with the following findings:

1. The public library is the major source of books in the community; it supplied about one quarter of all books read.

2. Community residents generally know little about the library since not many of them use it directly.

3. Library use varies with community size with smaller communities having a larger proportion of the population using the library.

4. At any one time the library registration file lists about 35 percent of the population but one in three children and one in ten adults were considered real users.

5. Characteristics of library users were: young and with schooling, women more than men, skilled more than unskilled workers, economically better off more than poorer persons, and those living nearby more than those living at a distance from the library. The clientele tended to be community opinion leaders who made wide use of the public library.

Recent studies have provided less definitive information on library use and user characteristics. The major works of the 60's dealt with library standards and services. The trend toward the incorporation of other-

than-print media, for example, and the upgrading of print collections in school libraries is an outgrowth of the attention paid to standards in recent years. The effect has been to provide an ever-increasing array of books for personal reading in addition to the multimedia materials so useful in building the images, percepts and concepts necessary for the full understanding and enjoyment of a wide variety of books.

Libraries continue to be a major source of books for the reading public. In an article in Publisher's Weekly, June 16, 1975, John Dessauer reported that libraries of all types spent a total of just over 500 million dollars in the year 1972-1973. At the same time he predicted an increase of spending within a six-year period of 48 percent. It appears that during the last decade or so, the amount spent by libraries annually equals approximately one fourth of all monies spent on books.

Taking all of the aforementioned information into consideration, the evidence leads us to believe that there is an abundance of materials available to read. These are found on newstands, in book stores, on paperback bookracks, through book clubs, by subscription and on the bookshelves of libraries. There is no scarcity of books, generally speaking.

*External influences on motivation to read.* Despite what seems to be a ready availability of books, it was estimated by David Godine *(Library Journal,* April 1, 1976) that 60 percent of the population are not buying books at all. In order to compete for sales among the remaining 40 percent, mass merchandising and advertising techniques are being utilized by bookstores and publishers. Reading interests are undoubtedly affected. As a result, there is a question as to what extent big money advertising is psychologically dictating book choices to the American people. Barnes and Noble, Inc., improved sales 40 percent by running six different ads on New York radio and TV stations daily. The Portland News Co. of Maine, which runs Bookland Stores, had a saturation advertising campaign for *Salem's Lot,* a local novel. Highest expectations were to sell 1000 copies; 3000 have already been sold. A Knopf editor, working for several days as a bookstore clerk, noted that many persons carried ads from the *New York Times Book Review* to determine choices.

Literacy links to big money movies were also evident. *Jaws,* for example, the highest-grossing movie of all time, was also the highest paid-for paperback — 1.85 million dollars. Sales have now topped seven million copies. Spin-off sales were also lucrative: *Jaws Log* (1,150,000); *Making of the Movie Jaws* (410,000) and *Shark: Attack or Man* (450,000). The same pattern of big advertising with high visibility and high volume sales exists for Woodward and Bernstein's, *All the President's Men* and its sequel, *The Final Days.*

A total of 47 paperback books, 13 of which sold over two million copies, made it to the best-seller list of a million plus copies in 1975. This represents a climb over the previous year. This trend, in the midst of a recession cycle, shows to what extent the public can be influenced to buy media-hyped bestsellers rather than to make independent choices.

To a lesser extent, one's peers and other associates influence what one reads. The effect of example, recommendation and demonstrated enthusiasm cannot be overlooked. Many read particular books and parts of books because of the informal advertising done by those in the immediate environment.

In addition to the influences exerted on *what* one reads, there are those that affect *whether* one reads. Many activities impinge on time set aside for pleasure. Those who do spend some time reading choose to do so in spite of the call of other interests such as television, family activities, sports, clubs and other organized activities. For those living in an area offering a large choice of things to do, reading is a conscious choice and must be planned in one's schedule.

Television is one of the most commonly recognized factors affecting personal motivation to read. According to recent surveys, Americans now spend, on the average, about five hours a day watching television. There is some evidence of positive effects of this viewing for children. The *Sesame Street* and *Electric Company* spectators are coming to school with more advanced reading readiness skills. General viewing of newscasts, animal life, travel and other educational-type programs also builds concepts and stimulates a curiosity to learn unequaled by a book-type introduction to these ideas. In a sense then, television viewing, when selective, can be considered a positive force in building motivation to read.

On the other hand, there are negative effects of importance, too. Most of the indoor recreational time of many children and adults is spent before the "tube." There is common acceptance of television as a reality in the home. For those who have become habitual viewers, little if any time is devoted to reading by adults or children. In fact, studies show that only one youngster in ten ever sees a parent read. Thus fewer children read as a result of the influence of a home environment where much viewing and little reading is done.

In drawing this section on the status of personal reading to a close, it may be concluded that there is much room for improvement in the literacy level of the populace. It seems that a large variety of reading materials is available through both public and private sources, but that matched against this evidence, statistics show that only 40 percent of the public, approximately, buy books, that daily newspaper circulation averages one per every four persons (undoubtedly the most widely read medium) and that library usage involves approximately 10 percent of the

adult population. In addition, some evidence has been provided to support the position that external influences affect both what people read and whether people read. There is little evidence that love of reading is an independent motivator affecting the free-time choice of activities for any significant number of people. It must be concluded that there is great room for growth in the group referred to as the reading public.

**Studies of Reading Interests**

There is a growing literature on elementary and secondary students' reading interests, and, to a lesser degree, on those of college students and adults. In this section, an attempt will be made to survey the literature available on elementary and secondary student preferences and draw some conclusions useful to educators and parents interested in cultivating the habit of wide personal reading among young people.

*Elementary level.* Most of the research available on elementary students' reading interests indicates that preferences are influenced most by age, sex and intelligence. As a rule, reading interests of growing children go through phases. They change as new personal interests develop and seem to be influenced less by externally dictated needs for information in school subject areas or other areas than by normal developmental growth patterns tempered by strong special interests.

Primary level youngsters, in general, are interested mainly in fairy tales, realistic stories based on everyday situations and nature stories. Children in the intermediate grades maintain an interest in these three areas but add others which reflect a diversification of their own interests and a curiosity about modern American life: stories about famous people, sports, machines, personal problems, physical sciences and social sciences.

Generally speaking, intelligent children's reading interests are on a slightly higher level than are those of less intelligent children. The more intelligent children read more difficult and more adult-oriented books such as biographies, modern novels, history, scientific materials and books treating social problems. A survey of the reading preferences of 264 fourth and fifth graders in a Bronx elementary school illustrate these differences: more than half of the high achievers in the study indicated that they preferred library books over all others whereas the low achievers showed a preference for the comic-type formats. An interesting outcome was that 98 percent of the pupils said their teacher didn't want them to read books in a comic-strip format. Of importance here, too, is that the one area in which both low and high achievers agreed was in humor. Both groups indicated a preference for stories

that contained something amusing or comical.

Age, sex and intelligence factors may even override the effects of socioeconomic background. A study by Johns showed that inner city intermediate grade children preferred the same types of stories as their suburban counterparts: a depiction of middle class settings, characters with positive self-concepts and characters in positive group settings.

Research by King (1967) indicated that before age nine few differences in reading interests appear between boys and girls. At age nine, boys begin to read more nonfiction, science, invention and action-oriented books. Girls, on the other hand, read more poetry and register preferences for stories about home and school, sentimental fiction and fairy tales. Research also indicates that girls will read a book considered to be of interest to boys but the reverse is seldom true. To the extent that this sex related difference is due to cultural stereotyping — the quiet, personal enrichment orientation for girls versus the "machismo"-orientation for boys — it may erode as the sharp differences between the sexes in cultural expectations are blunted. But, for the present, these differences cannot go unnoticed if interest in reading is to be cultivated.

*Secondary level.* The classic study in the field, *The Reading Interests of Young People* by George Norvell, 1973, emphasizes the importance of interest in developing the habit of reading. After studying this field for forty years, he ventured an opinion on how best to vitalize reading to develop a lifetime habit of reading. He said it was not by having adults choose from the classic and contemporary literature that which they felt young people should know. Nor did he think that the lightweight, ephemeral materials that adults assumed young people would like had achieved better results. He was convinced that a love of good reading might best be cultivated by providing young people with "an ample supply of literary selections which stand where the lines of student popularity and critical approval converge."

His study was designed to investigate student preferences among 4,993 assigned reading selections. Based on the analysis of data, he concluded that in grades seven through twelve, student preferences vary less due to age or intelligence than they do due to sex. He found that sex was a universal and highly significant factor and that the reading materials commonly used in literature classes are better liked by girls than by boys in a ratio of more than two to one. He recommended that the interests of boys and girls receive separate consideration and that, for common reading, only materials liked by both boys and girls be used.

The special factors found to interest boys are adventure (outdoor adven-

ture, war, scouting), outdoor games, school life, mystery (including activities of detectives), obvious humor, animals, patriotism, and male rather than female characters. Factors least liked among boys are love, other soft sentiments, home and family life, didacticism, religion, reflective or philosophical approaches, extended description, nature subjects such as flowers or birds, form or technique as a dominant factor and female characters.

The factors found especially favorable for girls are adventure without grimness, detective and other mystery stories, humor, animals, patriotism, love, other gentle sentiments, home and family life, and both male and female characters. The most unfavorable factors for girls are war and other grim adventures, extended description, didacticism, form or technique as a dominant factor and nature topics. It was found, however, that factors found unfavorable among the preferences of both boys and girls were tolerated to a considerably greater degree by girls than by boys.

It was found that among literary types, both boys and girls gave a favorable rating to novels, plays, short stories, and biographies of men. Girls also rated biographies of women as favorable. In addition, they rated essays and poems higher than boys. The Norvell book lists the student responses to the selections studied and may be referred to for specific reaction to particular selections.

Other studies using a different methodology have been reported in the literature. In a study published in 1973 of the reading interests of adolescents in Watseka High School, Illinois, a correlation was found between types of magazines read and intelligence scores, with specialized magazines such as *Hot Rod* and *True Story* appealing to those of below average intelligence while general periodicals such as *Reader's Digest* appealed more to the above average. Also, it was found that the higher the intelligence, the greater the tendency to read a newspaper regularly. In popularity, the print media were ranked overall in this order: magazines, books, newspapers. However, when the responses of seniors were taken separately, newspapers ranked first.

As well as supporting intelligence as a factor in student preferences, the Watseka Study data showed a wider gap in high school male-female reading interests than was found at the elementary level. High school boys in that study preferred reading books on sports, the world, biographies, war and crime whereas girls preferred reading books on romance, society, fashion, poetry, drama and autobiographies.

The same pattern held true in studies of high school newspaper reading interests. Boys ranked the front page first, the sports page second and the society page last. Girls preferred advice columns first, the front page second followed by the society page and the sports page last. Differences were found in magazine preferences, also.

As adolescents mature, questions of their own personal worth, relevance of activities to their own lives and social issues become concerns. Some survey results have shown that these concerns are also reflected in literary choices. For example, Helen Wilmot of the American Library Association analyzed the findings of 3,000 questionnaires sent to student leaders to determine the influence books had on them. Responses showed their concerns fell in three areas: the individual, social problems and responsibilities, and national and international events. These concerns contrast sharply with those of younger age groups.

In the section above, the literature on student interests has been briefly reviewed. It seems to support age, sex and intelligence as the most influential factors in the growth of student reading interests. Recognition of these general factors is important in establishing a school or community-wide program. However, in the actual implementation of a program some attention must be given to individual differences within these groups if all students are to be reached.

Once as wide a range of reading materials as possible is gathered — materials holding the potential for making personal reading an interesting and rewarding experience — attention must be turned to the process of bringing youngsters and books together. There are so many things a teacher or, preferably, a group of teachers can do to make personal reading come alive. Some are environmental and others are teacher guided. The next section will deal with some of these conditions that foster reading interest.

**Conditions That Foster Reading Interests**

The literature reviewed reveals that there is a greater availability of books today than ever before. Indications are, however, that only a small percentage of the population reads widely. Reasons for this undoubtedly include the literacy rate — approximately 20 percent of the population has been found to be functionally illiterate with an even larger portion barely functional but less than proficient — and the conflicting influences on motivation to read of other leisure-time activities including such things as sports, clubs and television viewing. Among many of those who do read there is a strong tendency to select the media-hyped books rather than to make independent choices. This may reveal, on the one hand, the importance of external motivation in book selection and, on the other hand, perhaps, a certain lack of knowledge about the literature available that would provide a basis for the independent selection of books for personal reading.

An analysis of the situation suggests that schools can do much to im-

prove the frequency and quality of personal reading. While many alternative steps may be taken in implementing a program for this purpose, certain basic conditions must exist to ensure success. In a motivating school:

*A positive attitude toward reading is projected.* Attitudes are both caught and taught. A teacher who reads and conveys some enthusiasm about reading provides a good model. Attitudes can be caught from the environment, too. Book jacket displays and bulletin boards that introduce books, authors, themes, genre, etc. make reading important. Personal reading can be programmed into the school day to develop the habit of reading with some time devoted to student sharing of books in informal ways. All contacts with books should be positive and natural. Situations where reading becomes a reward or punishment should be avoided because the subconscious associations children make with reading under those circumstances affect their attitudes toward reading in later life. Equal care should be taken not to set up competitive situations where the students who most need to be motivated are doomed to lose.

*All students are taught to read.* One of the greatest hindrances to wide personal reading is lack of reading skill. For students to be motivated to read they must find success in reading. They must have the skills to read what is interesting and appealing to them. Teachers can begin to make readers of all students first by believing that all can learn to read and then by working with them at appropriate levels in materials where success is assured and where the greatest amount of progress is possible. Individual differences in learning style and learning rate require adjustments in teaching if all are to learn; but the alternative is to send students on to a lifetime of failure. It is essential that substantial progress be made each year and that the school reading program be so organized that this is possible for every student, excepting only those who are seriously mentally defective.

Many schools have experimented with programs to stimulate reading skill development among the unmotivated. Some have found that using students' culture-related strengths and giving attention to their personal problems and their individual needs have helped the students to relate better to reading. Others have found that the use of individual interests as a basis for selecting materials has increased motivation. Involving the student in planning certain projects such as a class newspaper, a class book of stories or poems, etc., has provided a good starting place for those who need visible evidence of progress. With others, cooperation in learning has been enlisted by establishing objectives and activities that could be personally monitored. Raising self-esteem by setting up opportunities to participate in helping situations such as cross-age tutoring is another departure from traditional formats for

teaching that has met with success. In all of these innovative approaches, a certain amount of flexibility was found necessary if all were to learn to read, especially (but not exclusively) among older students.

*Personal independent reading is a component of the regular school reading program.* We tend to make investments where we see there is value and payoff. If this is true, then we would expect that a certain percentage of the time and budget allocated to the reading program would be used to foster personal independent reading if we believe it is worthwhile. Few schools make a real investment in this aspect of the program.

The heart of the reading program embodies the development of word recognition and comprehension skills, of course. But, as in the development of any skill area, many applications must be found to make the skills functional. These applications should be made both in content reading of a work-study nature and in literature to nurture the development of a lifelong habit of reading. The latter aspect of the program is often neglected.

Some authors claim that ages 9-14 are peak years for developing a lifelong interest in reading. After these years it becomes increasingly difficult, though not impossible, to produce an avid reader. The years before nine must set the stage by developing an interest in books. Reading aloud, storytelling sessions and encouragement of much easy reading of books appropriate to the age and independent reading level of primary level children provides the foundation. By age nine, children begin to develop personal interests and tastes in books. If good groundwork has been done, children are ready to move into the stage of wide personal reading. Every teacher should accept the responsibility for making this type of reading as vital a part of the reading program as basic skill development and content reading.

*The reading interests of students are appraised.* While research shows that student interests vary with sex, age and intelligence so that it is possible to determine, in general, what types of books will be preferred by a particular group, it also shows that there are important differences among the students in any group. An interest inventory administered to all students will reveal those differences and provide information useful for ordering books for the classroom and central library/media center and for planning activities to stimulate wide reading.

*Print materials for the personal independent reading program are selected with the independent reading level and interests of the students in mind.* The population in any given school has characteristics that make it slightly different from that in other schools. These special characteristics must be kept in mind in selecting books if students are to have available the kinds of books that will attract and hold them as readers.

First, it must be kept in mind that personal reading should be done at one's *independent reading level.* In elementary grades, this level is commonly one to one-and-a-half reader levels below the level at which instruction is being given while in secondary grades it may be two or more levels below instructional level. *The independent level is that level where a student has practically no difficulty reading — where approximately 98 percent of the words are recognized as sight words and 90 percent of the ideas are comprehended.* It is a level where students can read for enjoyment without seeking help. Reading widely at this level is beneficial in more ways than the one purpose being discussed here. Such a high rate of success in reading builds positive attitudes such as confidence (I can read) and self-concept (I am a reader) as well as skills such as fluency, quick word recognition, knowledge of word meanings in many contextual settings and familiarity with many types of literature. Development of these skills, in turn, raises the student's independent reading level, opening up a new wealth of books for personal choice.

A second criterion for book selection is student interest. While age, sex and intelligence can be used as general guides for determining the overall composition of a collection, personal interests appear at approximately age nine as a distinguishing factor among individuals and should be given some consideration. Basing a certain percentage of book selection on the outcome of an interest inventory would diversify the collection to include student preferences.

A third factor to consider is the point of departure in launching a program of personal reading. The question here is not what adults in the environment feel is *worth* reading, but rather what students *want* to read. A collection must hold the types of books that will draw in all readers including the reluctant ones. For some, that may mean a comic-book format or a pocket-size paperback. For others it may mean 10 volumes, one after another, of simple science experiments written at a second reader level, a number of high-interest low-vocabulary books or an adventure series written around the same characters. A collection should hold whatever students are willing to begin to read. That they exhibit relatively poor taste at first should be of no concern. The immediate purpose is to gain a toehold so progress can be made. It is then up to the teacher to develop interests and tastes through the kinds of experiences students find stimulating.

*Personal independent reading is stimulated in a variety of ways.* Whether or not it is an appealing thought to discriminating educators, surveys show that the media-hyped books are widely read by the American reading public. People do respond to the motivational techniques used in advertising. Applied judiciously, these techniques may be used to draw students into the circle of readers. Other techniques may be

used, too, of course. It may take a wide variety of ways to motivate everyone. In addition to basic conditions such as the enthusiasm of adults in the environment, and the telltale signs that "This is a reading school," as mentioned previously, these suggestions are offered:

1. Abandon the formal book review except as it fits into the program of college-bound high school juniors and seniors. For other purposes, substitute informal sharing sessions or techniques.

2. Become familiar with the literature written for the age group with which you work, especially that which relates to your subject if you are a content area teacher. No one can stimulate interest in books that are unfamiliar.

3. Devote some time to "selling" books, capitalizing on relationships to content subjects, holidays, current events, the presence of a certain author, the purchase of an award-winning book or any event that will help to develop a "ground swell" under the book and propel it forward.

4. Teach students several advertising techniques and encourage them to produce an ad for the bulletin board, using one of the techniques, to "sell" a book they found particularly good.

5. Invite students to write the name of a book they are willing to discuss and their own name on a 3 x 5 card. When a few minutes are available, the teacher may select one of the cards and ask the reader to tell the class why he/she liked the book. This type of activity has to move along rather quickly. It is suggested that only one or two questions about the book be accepted from the class before moving on. Students could also have access to this file to see what books others are reading and check with them before seeking out a particular book.

6. Provide opportunities for volunteer interest groups to dramatize a story or book. This may be done "live," on tape, through puppetry or with marionettes. For those students who need physical activity in their program, dramatization serves this additional need, too.

7. Set aside a small wall space where students may put up a poster, a collage, a montage, etc., to depict the plot or main character of a book.

8. Occasionally have students identify a theme or topic to read about for a week or so. Be sure there are many selections available in the classroom and library at a wide range of difficulty levels. At the end of the time period the group may be given the opportunity to share the many ways the theme or topic was developed in the books they read. This suggestion may be particularly applicable in content areas where biographies and novels can be found that relate to the people, events and topics under discussion.

9. Enlist the support of parents for this aspect of the program. Establish programs for parents to give them techniques for reading aloud to children, assisting children in selecting library books and providing a

stimulating environment for reading in the home. Parents want to know how to help. They are good allies in this effort.

10. Establish contact with the local library. Suggest some joint projects that will give community-wide importance to reading.

There are more ways to stimulate personal reading than there is space here to record them. Several lists are published in the literature. Also, in every school system there are teachers with a wealth of ideas. These can be pooled and shared. The important thing is to recognize that it's every teacher's responsibility to contribute toward establishing an environment where high motivation for reading is fostered. It is something that one teacher alone can do to some extent. But together, a school faculty can turn out students who cherish personal reading as a lifetime activity.